

Smog Check Stations

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The Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) licenses or contracts with four different types of Smog Check facilities. The various stations are designed to provide consumers with multiple options to meet their needs.

Test and Repair Stations

Test-and-Repair Stations

Test-and-repair stations are licensed by the state to provide Smog Check tests and repairs to most vehicles. Under current law, test-and-repair stations are prohibited from certifying repaired Gross Polluters or vehicles that have been directed to Test-Only stations for inspection. Only Test-Only stations and Gold Shield stations are able to certify repaired Gross Polluters.

Gold Shield Stations

Gold Shield stations are licensed Test-and-Repair stations that have been certified by BAR. In addition to the services provided by regular Test-and-Repair stations, Gold Shield stations can certify vehicles identified as Gross Polluters and perform the "after-repairs" certification of vehicles directed to Test-Only stations for an initial inspection. Gold Shield stations also perform state subsidized emissions-related repairs on vehicles participating in the Consumer Assistance Program.

Test-Only Stations

Test-Only stations are licensed by the state to only perform tests on vehicles. They are prohibited from performing any repair services. Gross Polluters can also be certified at these stations. In addition, potentially high-polluting vehicles in the state's smoggiest regions are directed to these stations for their initial Smog Check inspections, as specified on the Department of Motor Vehicles registration renewal form.

Referee Centers

Referee Centers are state-contracted facilities that handle special cases for consumers who own vehicles that need specialized inspection services. They perform a number of important functions for consumers, including: the certification of vehicles issued a Limited Parts Exemptions; grey market vehicles, specially-constructed vehicles, and vehicles with engine changes; verifying certain disputes between a station and consumer; issuing Smog Check repair cost waivers; and helping resolve other Smog Check issues. To make an appointment at a Referee Center, call 1-800-622-7733.

Consumer Tips

As with other consumer products and services, it is always best to shop around for quality service that best meets your needs. Since market forces drive the price of a Smog Check and any related repair work, some stations may charge different prices than others. To determine what services a station provides, or for other information about the Smog Check program, please log onto the Smog Check Web site at www.smogcheck.ca.gov or call 1-800-952-5210.